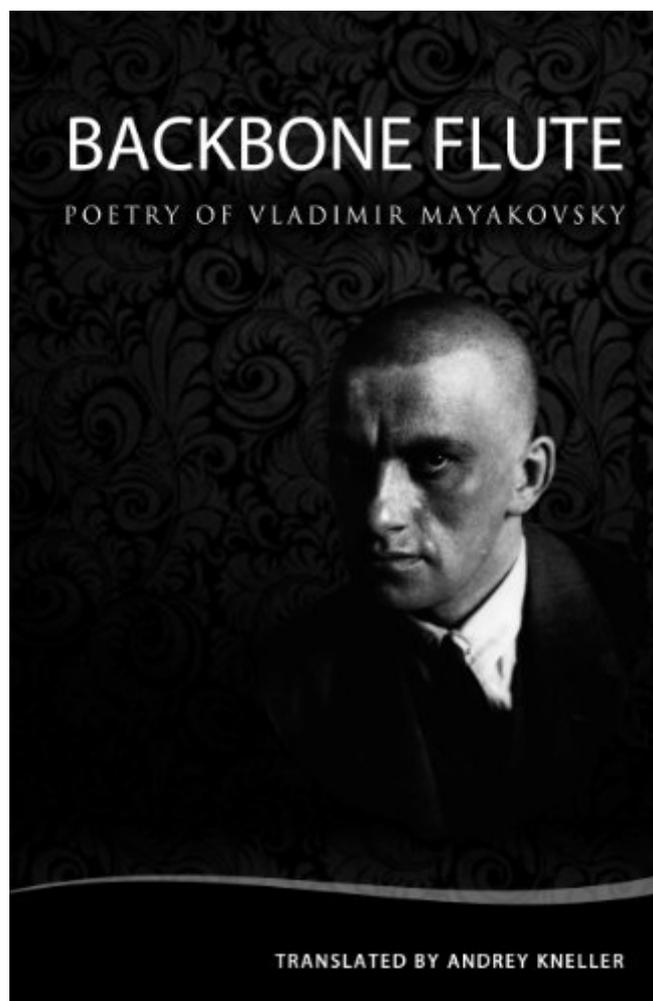


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Backbone Flute: Selected Poetry Of Vladimir Mayakovsky



Synopsis

Vladimir Mayakovsky (July 19, 1893 - April 14, 1930) is one of the most recognized and celebrated poets of the Russian canon. One of the leaders of the Russian Futurism movement, which sought to capture the wonder of the fast-paced modern world and renounced the static art of the past, Mayakovsky completely bent the boundaries of language and introduced an entirely different style of poetry. His irregular line-breaks, his use of internal rhyme, his control of meter and his sense of rhythm combined together to form his unique style. His imagery is overflowing with allusions, metaphors and hyperboles. His major works, "A Cloud in Trousers," "Backbone Flute," and "I Love," sparkle with wit, wisdom and originality. This quality of his work is what also makes it incredibly difficult to translate. In this dual-language selection of Mayakovsky's poetry, Andrey Kneller attempts to capture not only the general meaning, but also the lyrical quality of the poetry that makes Mayakovsky a truly unique writer.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I've read the superb little City Lights book of Mayakovsky's work (Listen! Early Poems (City Lights Pocket Poets Series), translated by Maria Enzensberger), and Kneller's translations holds up to that

standard. The book has a decent selection of Mayakovsky's poetry, from various periods in his life. It's easy to get the sense that Kneller put a lot of time into making Mayakovsky's work both rigidly artistic while at the same time practical and vernacular, and this is ultimately why so many translations fail. It is unfortunate that this book fails on a more superficial level: the content is fine but the book as a book is just embarrassing. There are numerous typos, including the lack of periods. It's quite obvious because it occurs so frequently. Also, the formatting (most noticeably the m-dashes) is not consistent. I found myself going back and forth between the Russian and the English (both on facing pages), and finding quite easily inconsistencies. The notes that are in the back of the book are also inconsistent. The note titles in the back will sometimes (but not always!) be the same as the words they are referencing in the text. For example, "Good!" is in the text, and "Good" is what the reference page lists. Now obviously this isn't a crucial problem, but it is annoying to see that a published book is being printed with such juvenile errors. Also, let me take a brief moment to call out some "interesting" decisions that were made in the book layout. The book begins with a title page (that has a page number on it!

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